



BOOK REVIEWS

Ajay Mehra
Book Review Editor

Book Review Symposium: *Managing Network Resources*, by Ranjay Gulati. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

From the Book Review Editor

This book brings together some fifteen years of research by Ranjay Gulati (and a network of collaborators) on how the complex web of social and economic relationships in which firms are embedded influences both the performance of firms and, over time, the evolution of the web itself. Because the book focuses on fundamental questions related to the origins and consequences of interorganizational alliances and because it seeks to explicitly develop a network theory of these phenomena, it will no doubt generate broad interest within the Academy. The purpose of this symposium—in which three leading scholars offer us their critical assessment of the book—is to fan the flames of debate and discussion.

Network Resources: Toward a New Social Network Perspective, by Dovev Lavie, Technion–Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, and The University of Texas at Austin

Today, social network perspectives dominate research on interorganizational relationships. But a dozen years ago, when scholars concentrated on the nature of dyadic ties between firms and their economic implications, applications of social network perspectives were mostly limited to the behavior of individual actors. With his rigorous and highly influential research agenda, Ranjay Gulati has offered a key contribution to the adaptation and adoption of social approaches for studying interorganizational networks. It is now time for him to take stock of his scholarship, provide retrospective insights, and pave the way for future research.

Based on a selection of Gulati's most influential articles (which together have been cited more than 2,000 times, according to Harzing's Publish or Perish), *Managing Network Resources* elegantly achieves these objectives. The book addresses fundamental questions concerning the antecedents and consequences of interorganizational networks by synthesizing the main themes that emerge from Gulati's research. Effectively integrating theory, field observations, and empirical analysis, the book offers a fresh conceptualization of the phenomenon of interfirm alliances, bringing greater coherence to the fragmented literature on this topic. Over the years, Gulati has diligently promoted the network perspective for the study of interfirm alliances, and this book demonstrates its useful application. The main contribution of the book, however, is in offering a comprehensive account of the notion of "network resources," first introduced by Gulati in his *Strategic Management Journal* article on network location and learning (Gulati, 1999). With this unifying theme, *Managing Network Resources* raises intriguing questions and sets directions for future research on interorganizational networks and alliance portfolios. Although the book emphasizes the role of information flows in alliance networks, the implications for other types of network resources and modes of interorganizational ties are made clear. Having had the opportunity to conduct research in Gulati's domain, I feel that this book can be invaluable to both novice scholars and experts with an intimate understanding of the social network literature. I proceed by briefly reviewing the book's chapters and then concentrate on the notion of network resources and its implications.

ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF INTERORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS

In his introduction, Gulati explains the positioning of the book in the social network litera-

Copyright of *Academy of Management Review* is the property of *Academy of Management* and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.